

---

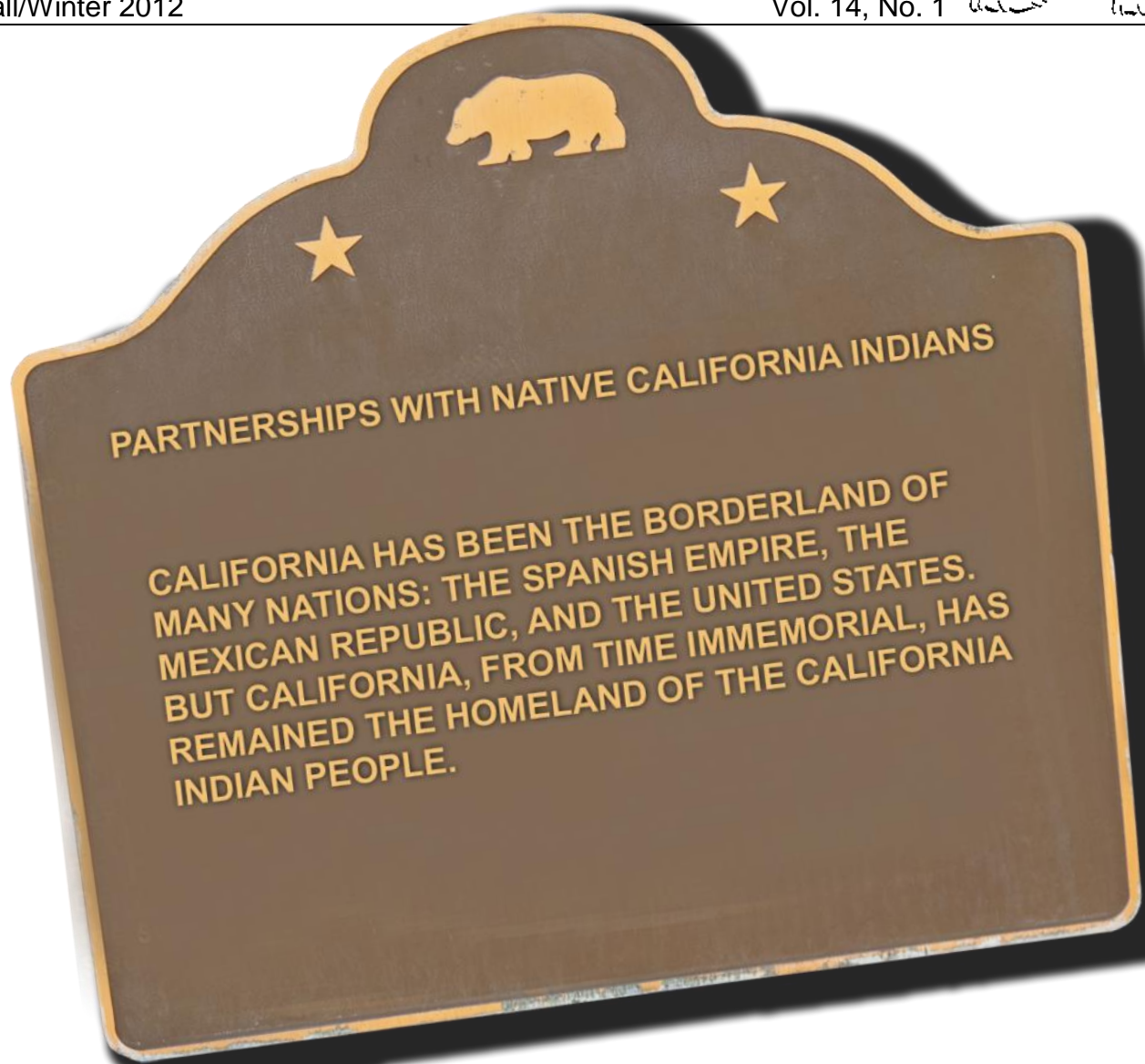
# *The* *Catalyst*



Fall/Winter 2012

Vol. 14, No. 1

---



**Partnerships with  
Native California Indians**

---



*The Catalyst* is published periodically by California State Parks, © [year]. Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of California State Parks. By submitting a manuscript to *The Catalyst* the author assumes full responsibility for any copyright infringement. Please contact the editor for permission to reprint any item appearing in *The Catalyst*.

ISSN 1089-9286

For address changes or additional subscriptions, call or email the Interpretation and Education Division at

(916) 654-2249  
or  
interp@parks.ca.gov

**Guest Editor:** Ty O. Smith  
Hearst San Simeon  
State Historical Monument  
tysmith@parks.ca.gov

**Publisher:** Donna Pozzi  
Interpretation & Education  
(916) 653-4643  
dpozzi@parks.ca.gov

**Copy Editor:** Carol Cullens  
Interpretation & Education  
ccull@parks.ca.gov

## Contributor's Guidelines

*The Catalyst* welcomes your original articles up to two pages in length. We prefer unpublished material, but will occasionally reprint items published elsewhere. Be sure to include information about the publication so we can get permission to use the material. If you have an article relating to one of the topics listed below, please submit it to the publisher or guest editor. Please include a photograph whenever possible.

We really appreciate items submitted on CD or by email in a PDF format. Please send photographs as separate files, not inserted into your document. You may also submit original photographs or other illustrations to *The Catalyst*. All photos and artwork submitted will be returned promptly. We reserve the right to edit all material. Items are selected for publication solely at the discretion of the publisher and guest editor. We appreciate your suggestions.

## Guest Editors Wanted!

Are you looking for an opportunity to work with other writers on engaging interpretive topics? Would you like to develop and challenge your creative and technical skills? Then consider becoming a Guest Editor for an upcoming issue of *The Catalyst*. Among the topics we're planning for future issues are:

[Intellectual Property Rights]  
[Interpretation Programs for Teens]

Please contact Donna Pozzi with your ideas, dpozzi@parks.ca.gov.

## Help *The Catalyst* Reduce Waste

We at *The Catalyst* know that you care about both the information we present and the environment. To reduce our carbon footprint, we'd like to deliver future issues of this publication directly to your email inbox. To cancel your paper subscription and have your next issue sent to the email address of your choice, please contact Corinne Nelson at cnelson@parks.ca.gov. To find you in our database, we will need to know your full name and address (or if you receive *The Catalyst* via interoffice email, your unit number). Please provide this information along with the desired email address to ensure that we update your status properly.

# From the Guest Editor

This issue of *The Catalyst*, which focuses on the state of the Department's partnerships with Native California Indians, was born out of years of discussions about the uneven quality of such interactions in the realm of interpretation. The common thread that links all of our state parks, whatever their official classifications, is that they were all once the home of Native People. While buildings and campfire rings have covered village sites, these places continue to be important for modern California Indians. But relatively few of these parks fully interpret their Native pasts, nor their connections to modern California Indians. This critique has come from individuals inside and outside of the Department. In the many interactions I have had with California Indians, both professionally and in my academic life, it is certainly something that comes up frequently.

Last February, at the District Interpretation Coordinator's Workshop, I lead a roundtable discussion about this topic, which included participants from a variety of districts and divisions within the Department. The purpose of the discussion was to engage in an honest and open dialogue about what we Interpreters are doing well, upon what we can improve, and to identify some impediments to our success (both internally and externally). Consultation and partnerships, at least in the realm of interpretation programing, is not happening in a sustained and uniform way throughout the Department.

Some districts are doing a very good job with partnerships, but many others are not. But one realization that emerged from our discussion was that everyone present seemed willing, if not always able, to foster stronger partnerships. There are, however, a number of ongoing challenges, such as lack of awareness, legacies of past relationships, lack of communication within districts, lack of time, and the list goes on.

The articles within this issue are intended to further the reach of some of the topics that came up during February's meeting. Many of the speakers that participated in the roundtable discussion have contributed to this publication, which, I hope, will

extend the discussion to a larger audience.

Another purpose of this issue is to provide some resources for interpreters who may be engaged (or would like to be engaged) in programs that require relationships with Native California Indians.

By no means does this brief edition constitute a comprehensive look at the issues that we face with regard to partnerships with California Indians, nor does it contain all of the remedies necessary to "master" the topic. I do hope, however, that it makes the path to success a little clearer. This work will never be "done." With effective partnerships with Native California Indians, as with most other aspects of interpretation, the process is just as important as the product.

**Ty Smith** first started working for California State Parks twelve years ago as a guide at Hearst Castle when he was a history major at Cal Poly. He moved to Sacramento to work as a guide supervisor at the California State Capitol Museum and later as an interpreter in the Interpretation and Education Division. Along the way, he also attended graduate school at CSUS, where he completed a Master's degree in Public History and at UCSB, where

he is currently a Ph.D. candidate and is working on a dissertation in the Public Historical Studies program. He has lectured in the History Department at CSUS and is currently working as the Chief of Museum Interpretation at Hearst Castle.



Photo by Constance Gordon

# What's Up?

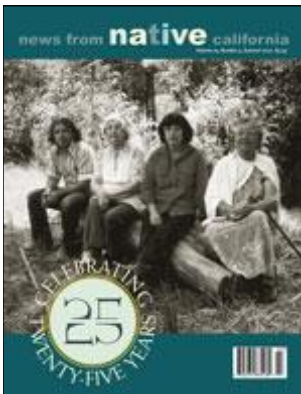


## Resources for Interpreters

by Ty Smith

### Resources for Partnerships with Native California Indians:

#### *News from Native California and Heyday Press*



*News from Native California*, is a quarterly magazine published by Heyday Press devoted to California's indigenous people. The magazine offers features articles on diverse topics such as environmental issues, archaeology, history, poetry, short fiction, and other arts, by California Indian writers, "all emphasizing Native Californian points of view, historic and contemporary." Regular columns focus on California Indian languages, the arts, books, skills & technology, law, and more. *News*, also provides a calendar of events so that readers can keep abreast of events within and related to Native California Indian lifeways.

News from Native California: <http://www.heydaybooks.com/news/calendar.html>

News from Native California: <http://www.heydaybooks.com/news/index.html>

Heyday Press: <https://heydaybooks.com/>

#### California Indian Basketweavers Association (CIBA)

"CIBA's goal is to preserve, promote, and perpetuate California Indian basket weaving traditions while providing a healthy physical, social, spiritual, and economic environment for basketweavers.

Membership is open to weavers and non-weavers alike, as well as to non-Indian supporters of California Indian basket weaving. The organization publishes a quarterly newsletter and sponsors an annual Gathering where weavers demonstrate and sell their work, share techniques and stories, buy materials, and generally support each other. With each gathering, the network of weavers and their supporters grows, enabling the 'continuation of the art and its passage to the next generation.

CIBA also works with local, state, and federal agencies and lawmakers to increase access to gathering areas, reintroduce traditional resources to particular sites, limit the use of harmful pesticides, and raise awareness for weavers and Native California cultures. Since the formation of CIBA the number of California Indian basket weavers has substantially increased, including the number of basket weavers earning income from selling baskets, teaching, or demonstrating their art. In part due to CIBA's efforts, California basketry traditions are on a more secure footing and will continue into the foreseeable future." <http://www.ciba.org/index.php>

#### California Native American Heritage Commission

"The Mission of the Native American Heritage Commission is to provide protection to Native American burials from vandalism and inadvertent destruction, provide a procedure for the notification of most likely descendants regarding the discovery of Native American human remains and associated grave goods, bring legal action to prevent severe and irreparable damage to sacred shrines, ceremonial sites, sanctified cemeteries and place of worship on public property, and maintain an inventory of sacred places."



While this mission does not speak directly to the interpretation of cultural and natural resources, the organizational structure of the commission can be a helpful initiation to the consultation process because the commission maintains lists of federally recognized, state recognized, and non-recognized tribal groups throughout California. As California pays more attention to issues of consultation, it is possible that the Commission's role may expand more formally into issues such as interpretation.

<http://www.nahc.ca.gov/default.html>

## California Indian Conference

The California Indian Conference and Gathering is an annual event for the exchange of views and information among academics, educators, California Indians, students, tribal nations, native organizations and community members.

There is no formal association, but each year, since 1985, an institution, usually a college, agrees to host the next conference. While these conferences deal with a variety of statewide issues, they often highlight the specific cultural traditions from groups from the region in which the conference is being held. Information from past conferences from 1985 to 2010, including conference programs, can be found here:

<http://bss.sfsu.edu/calstudies/cic/>

To find out information about future conferences, simply perform an internet search for "California Indian Conference"

"You will have to do Native American consultation." This sentence can strike fear into the bravest State

Parks employee. What does this mean? What do you have to do? What can you expect? Will we be able to move forward with our project? These may be some of the questions asked by anyone confronted with this requirement.

What is Native American consultation? Consultation is the act of reaching out to California Native American tribes to give them the opportunity to participate in projects within State Parks that either tell the story of their tribal history or have the potential to have an effect on a physical resource associated with their tribal territory, past land use, sacred site, or artifact collection. The most meaningful—and effective—consultation happens early in the planning process for any project, not after a project is fully developed.

The goal is to include the tribe in the decision making process, not seek their approval after the fact.

***"Don't be surprised if tribal input changes the direction of your project - be open to suggestions of how the tribe wants to see its history, customs, traditions, or skills portrayed to the general public."***

Involving the tribe early in the process begins with contacting the appropriate people, usually provided by the Native American Heritage Commission's consultation list. Then one sets up a face-to-face meeting with the tribe to discuss project vision (design or media), what is driving the need for the project, and the goals of the project (interpretation, education, data gathering, etc.).

Don't be surprised if tribal input changes the direction of your project - be open to suggestions of how the tribe wants to see its history, customs, traditions, or skills portrayed to the general public. How can State Parks accommodate their requests or concerns? Be flexible in your time frame and time use; consultation, especially in the beginning of the relationship, may take several back-and-forth meetings.

Be prepared to meet with tribal contacts outside of work hours (they have jobs too) and outside of your own office (plan to attend meetings on their "home turf"). Often we can be more flexible and have a better ability to travel to their site than the

## Clarifying Tribal Consultation

by Kathleen Lindahl,  
Senior State Archaeologist  
Archaeology, History and Museums  
Division

*Continued on next page*

### *Consultation continued...*

reverse - but most importantly, it is a matter of respect. Remember, you are developing an ongoing partnership with this tribe. Their interest in your park unit is going to continue into the future.

Be familiar with State Parks consultation policy (DN 2007-05) and the new Executive Order (B-10-11, Governor Brown, 9-19-2011). There are also several documents that are valuable references in how consultation is defined, considered, and implemented in other agencies - I have included them here:

2005 "Tribal Consultation Guidelines" Supplement to General Plan Guidelines (for cities and counties). State of California, Governor's Office of Planning and Research. This reference is linked to the website for the Native American Heritage Commission

2005 "Tribal Consultation, Best Practices in Historic Preservation". National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, Washington, D.C.

2001 "Management Policies 2001, National Park Service" - Cultural Resource Management Chapter (5), sections 5.2.1 to 5.2.3.

My experiences in consultation have been positive in that I gained an understanding of a culture and world view very different from my own. My respect for California tribal people has grown with each encounter, and my desire to tell "their story" has also become firmly committed into my professional life. May the same be true for you.

Kathleen Lindahl can be reached at:

[klind@parks.ca.gov](mailto:klind@parks.ca.gov)

## **The IPIT Report - Interpreting to Diverse Audiences Training**

**By Nancy Mendez  
Regional Interpretive Specialist  
Southern Service Center**

After a six year hiatus, thanks in large part to the advocacy of the Interpretation Performance Improvement Team (IPIT), Interpreting to Diverse Audiences (IDA) training was once again offered this past spring. The training has traditionally been a multi-agency effort, from the planning to presenters and participants. This year's planning partners included the Bureau of Land Management, California State Parks, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, National Park Service, and the USDA Forest Service.

The 32-hour training was held in conjunction with the 2012 California Parks Training in Southern California's Agoura Hills. In addition to classroom instruction, IDA included field excursions to The Autry National Center for an overview of interesting California's diverse voices, and to Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook for an exploration of the park's

innovative school programs. In-class presentations addressed a range of topics such as social media, creating and sustaining partnerships, outreach program development, and identifying target audiences.

"Engaging and Welcoming Indigenous Peoples" was a thought-provoking presentation based on a list of suggestions to improve relationships with tribal or indigenous communities. The session was moderated by one of the list developers, Wendy Teeter, Curator of Archaeology - Fowler Museum at UCLA. Two invited guests, Ted Garcia (Chumash), Traditional Stone-Carver and Storyteller and Julie Tumamait-Stenslie (Chumash), Commissioner - California Native American Heritage Commission, shared examples of related personal experiences as each item was read.

Their insights provided first-hand perspectives, increasing participant awareness of the session's objectives: how to partner, share and facilitate understanding, and appreciation of cultures in a respectful and appropriate manner. As the list suggests, it is essential that we work closely with tribal or indigenous communities throughout any program planning process that strives to include and interpret cultural groups.

Top Eleven Suggestions that can Improve Relationships with Tribal or Indigenous Communities  
Developed by:

Wendy Teeter, Fowler Museum at UCLA and Suntayea Steinruck, Smith River Rancheria

1. Be Aware of Body Language
2. Corrections/Suggestions are not personal
3. Have Images Reviewed for Cultural Accuracy
4. Collaboration Should Begin with the Idea
5. Determine Deadlines/Objectives with Tribe
6. Make Plans to Accommodate for Cultural Protocols and Needs
7. Build in for Flexibility
8. Provide Access to All Documentation
9. Have All Bone Identified by Experts
10. Cultures Change through Time
11. Identify Space Uses and be Conscious of Meeting/Work Locations

The **mission** of the **Interpretive Performance Improvement Team** is to facilitate the improvement of interpretive performance through high-quality learning experiences by identifying needs, developing training and resources, and evaluating outcomes for employees and volunteers of California State Parks (Revised January 14, 2008).

Please contact the Interpretive Performance Improvement Team at [IPIT@parks.ca.gov](mailto:IPIT@parks.ca.gov) if you have any questions or would like additional information.



# Thoughts on Consultation

by Paulette Hennum

Museum Curator III

Archaeology, History and Museums Division

In the fall of 2004, I received a call from the Museum Studies Program at JFK University in Berkeley asking if I'd be interested in taking on a special intern. I agreed to meet the student and see if he was a good fit. I learned that he was a member of the Hoopa tribe interested in "building a museum for his people." I offered him the internship and he said he would "pray about it" and get back to me in a few days. I did indeed hear back and he said that he would be "honored" to be my intern. His intriguing responses piqued my interest and so began my journey working with contemporary California Indian people. I became both mentor and mentee and this new path would lead me to the most challenging yet rewarding experiences in my career.

I have been asked to share with you some observations based on my personal experiences during my work in coordinating the department's repatriation (aka NAGPRA) program and in planning for the California Indian Heritage Center.

I believe that well-conducted consultation is the basis of successful interactions between agencies and Indian people. It is important to remember that consultation is a relatively new concept for all. In the not-too-distant past, Indian people were not asked for input and museums did not readily offer access to information or collections. We are collectively building new traditions and professional practices. This may require modifying traditional practices or rethinking concepts that have been at the core of one's professional training. As tribes have had to develop new rituals for re-burying their ancestors, museums have had to surrender their role as intellectual and physical gatekeepers. It requires relinquishing control, sharing authority and knowledge, and being genuinely open to different ways of doing things.

***"In the not-too-distant past, Indian people were not asked for input and museums did not readily offer access to information or collections. We are collectively building new traditions and professional practices."***

If you become involved with consultation at any level, you will soon realize that meeting protocols are quite different than what you are used to. Even when a group is large, participants frequently sit in a circle rather than in rows. This ensures an equal vantage point for all and underscores the value placed on face to face relationships held by many traditional California Indians. Although often considered a pejorative term, "Indian time" is based on real values and ways of conducting business. The pace of meetings is frequently much slower than you might be accustomed to, often starting late and running longer than expected. Participants rarely interrupt each other and almost everyone, Elders in particular, who desires to speak is allowed time to express his point of view.

Pauses are considered a time for reflection - not an opportunity for someone to interject her comments before the speaker has finished. Consensus decision making is often the preferred outcome and getting there can take much

longer than calling for a majority rules vote.

Although we have a well-written consultation policy to rely on (DN 2007-05), it may take a while for this new mindset to become automatic. If you find yourself emailing or leaving voicemail messages for the tribe to "keep them in the loop" or "to bring them up to speed" or if your consultation discussion addresses only aspects of an issue that you care about, you are probably not engaged in meaningful consultation. Simply informing the tribe about things that have already happened or deciding to share only what you choose is not consultation.

I hope that my remarks will be helpful as you develop your own consultation skills.

Paulette Hennum can be reached at:

[phenn@parks.ca.gov](mailto:phenn@parks.ca.gov)



# Dear Master Interpreter

Dear Master Interpreter,

I don't really know how to refer to the Indians I interpret. "Indian" does not sound politically correct and Native American sounds too vague. I want to talk about Native Americans related to my park, but I do not want to offend them. What term should I use or is it easier to just not talk about them at all?

Sincerely,  
Anxious about Appellations

Dear Anxious,

There are many terms or references used when talking about Indians or Native Americans. Some don't have any preferences, while others may be offended by one term yet not the next. My suggestion is to get in contact with the group that you want to reference. Ask them if they have a preference or give them the various terms and see what they like the best. This is their story to be told, and we should encourage their participation, not completely remove them from California's history because we're not sure what to call them. I've come to find out that many Indians from California prefer to call themselves California Indian, emphasizing their identity on California.

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

Do we have department guidance on what to do about tribes that are not federally recognized? I can see this becoming an increasing issue due to the rise in disenrollments. We recently met with the representatives of an approximately six person tribe; six now because they disenrolled about 100 people within the last decade. This action is, of course, in court and there are some seriously bad feelings. The disenrolled members would also like to meet with us, and include a number of people who appear knowledgeable about tribal history and culture. But officially the BIA does not currently recognize them as a tribe.

As interpreters I don't think, no, I KNOW that we don't want to step into these disputes, and I am

curious to know  
what you would  
suggest.

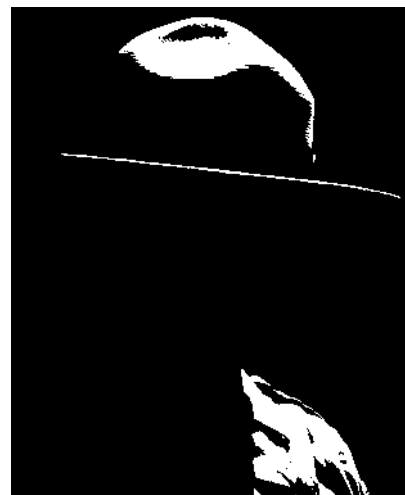
Signed,  
An Interpreter  
Divided

Dear Divided,

Your question points to just one of the politically-charged aspects of working with Native groups. And you are right; we want to avoid these internal disputes. In many ways, however, federal or state recognition, enrollment status, and the like, should not really factor into our consultation processes, especially not in terms of interpretive programming. The idea behind consultation is a two-way communication that allows both (or multiple parties) to ask questions, address concerns, and provide input. There is nothing in the policy that mandates federal recognition as a precondition of consultation. It may be a factor in the repatriation of grave goods, monitoring of archaeological exploration, or similar circumstances, but it has little to do with gaining a better understanding of historical experiences and contemporary attitudes toward an interpretive topic or in providing people the forum to shape how aspects of their history are told. If it is the latter we seek, then we should cast a pretty wide net and be willing to talk to the six people in the tribe and the 100 who were disenrolled (although perhaps not at the same time).

The key is to be open. I have seen numerous instances where institutions "Indian shop." They look for the group (or sometimes individual) whose opinion most closely matches their prior assumptions and then point to them as validation. I see this as a major problem, because consultation should be about more than simply rubber stamping a product. It should also be about the process. It is only through an inclusive process that we can build relationships, and only through relationships that we can forge partnerships.

MI



# Getting it Right in the Redwoods

## A Conversation with Susan Doniger by Ty Smith

**Susan Doniger** is the District Interpretive Coordinator for the North Coast Redwoods District. A brief discussion with Susan reveals that the District's current success related to partnerships with local tribes is not automatic. It has required an ongoing commitment of district staff over the last decade. And while Susan affirms that there are still some ongoing challenges, the commitment of staff from various classifications within the District to engage in consultation with local tribes early and often has led to positive results.

**Your district is recognized as a leader in working with Native California Indian nations. To what do you attribute this distinction?**

It's been the work of many District staff over the course of about a dozen years that has built up communication and trust between DPR and local tribes.

**What challenges have you faced in working with Native California Indians in your district?**

The complexities of tribal interests and affiliations are areas we are still learning about. Local Native groups may also have different communication styles and world views unlike ours.

**Can you describe some success stories? What projects really worked?**

We've consulted and worked quite successfully on a number of projects. From an interpretive perspective, we've had the participation of a local tribe at our Living History event at Fort Humboldt SHP and worked with a number of other tribes on

many interpretive signage and publication projects. **And to what would you attribute this success? Was it the strength of existing relationships? The ability of staff to make changes to accommodate different ideas, etc.?**

Yes, the Native California Indian Nations are very active politically, culturally and economically on the North Coast—and are recognized as influential stake holders and partners in our region.



"Sumêg" village located in Patrick's Point State Park is used by the local Yurok community for education of their youth

**Have you had any well-intentioned failures? In other words, were you and the groups with which you were working really invested in a project, but just could not come to terms?**

There are always things we could do better...sometimes a project would not be scoped well or consulted with early enough...though I can honestly say this is occurring less and less frequently. We have our District Archaeologist, Greg Collins, who has a very good relationship with our local tribal groups and is very proactive about heading off potential areas of disagreement.

**Where did the breakdown(s) occur?**

It's mostly a lack of communication about the complexity of our state rules and policy...but that is becoming more infrequent.

**What advice would you give to interpreters wishing to establish partnerships with Native People associated with their parks?**

I would first consult our Departmental Notice 2007-05 on Native American consultation, which explains the process.

Susan Doniger can be reached at:  
[sdoniger@parks.ca.gov](mailto:sdoniger@parks.ca.gov)

# 60



**The number of major tribal groups in what is now the State of California. Within this group of 60, there exist hundreds of smaller divisions. California has the most native diversity of any state in the Union.**

**The number of Native Americans living in California according to the 2010 U.S. Census. California has the highest Native Population in the Nation, including Native Americans from tribes indigenous to California and those who relocated to the area throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.**



## By the Numbers

**Number of California State Park units that contain cultural and natural resources related to Native California Indians**



# 280

**“California was once home to over 300 Native American dialects and as many as 90 languages, making it the most linguistically diverse state in the US. Today, only about half of those languages are still with us”**

**acls.org**

# 362, 801

# Building Partnerships with Native California Indians

## by Ty Smith

Paulette Hennum once told me: "before you can have a partnership you must first have a relationship." Some districts do better than others, and some failures are not for lack of trying. Considered as a whole, however, our success in partnering with California Indians is uneven. But I think Eleanor Roosevelt was right when she said that "It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness." By way of "lighting a candle," here are some things for our collective consideration, none of which are "easy" and none that alone would make us completely successful, but all of which would take us at least a bit closer to relationship and on to true partnerships with Native California Indians.

### Interpreting Cultural Continuity

While parks interpreters often acknowledge that Native California Indians were a part of their park's history, oftentimes such references are left in the past tense. At any given park you can hear interpreters say things like: "The Chumash once lived here, or the Miwok once hunted here." Such statements can make Modern Native people feel relegated to the past, even though traditions sometimes thousands of years old still continue in the present. California Indians, for example, may continue to collect basket weaving materials, honor ancestors, or engage in recreational activities in a park, but these activities may not always be acknowledged. Interpreting processes is one way in which native people can contribute in telling their own stories, both those of the past and their place within the present. The California State Indian Museum features basket weavers and other craftspeople that demonstrate the process of creation, but also tell of their peoples' history, and their role within modern life. There are other parks that feature such activities at special events. All of these are a good start.



*State Indian Museum Volunteer tells stories at a State Indian Museum gathering*

There may be ways in which the Department can tell Native California Indian histories on a larger scale through interpreting process. As detailed by M. Kat Anderson in her book *Tending the Wild*, many of the places that we see today as "natural" or "wild" actually bear the imprint of Native California Indian land management practices that date back thousands of years. European explorers often described California as vast parkland and, in many ways, it was, because it was managed as such. As Kathie Lindahl once proposed, could a park, either one already existing, or a future acquisition, be co-managed in a way that would give visitors an appreciation for these practices? Visitors would watch modern California Indians engage in such traditional practices as controlled burning, clearing, bulb propagation, and harvesting of cultural materials, while still meeting land management goals, and allowing for the continuation of traditional native practices. Are there other ways, large or small, in which you can interpret Native people associated with your park by demonstrating cultural continuity from past to present?

### Telling the History Where it Happened

In the 1970s, the department developed a number of Regional Indian museums. Placed throughout California, these sites were designed to tell the stories of Native California Indians, both past and present. One of the strengths of these museums is that they highlight the unique nature of California Indian cultures. There is, in fact, no such thing as a California Indian, only Indian groups that reside in a geo-political boundary recognized as the State of California. A line on the map did not in reality divide Indian Nations living along the "borders" of California and its neighboring states and nation. While



there is some continuity among the more than 60 tribes, recognized collectively as "California Indians," there were and are many differences.

One of the big problems with the regional Indian museum model is that they had a tendency to become *the* place to interpret California Indian experiences. Do we really need to interpret Indian life at Sutter's Fort? Will not people get this history by visiting the State Indian Museum? The answer for this example and many others is a resounding "no." The regional Indian Museums and the State Indian Museum (as well as the yet-to-be-built California Indian Heritage Center) do a wonderful job, but—for a variety of reasons—they should not be the only places that interpret California Indian experiences. If your park has Native American histories, however complicated or nuanced, that is the best place to tell them.

Exasperated by the lack of quality interpretation related to California Indians, past and present, many tribes and Native People are giving up on state parks and are building their own museums. And while it is true that these museums often do a better job, it is a shame that such energy and commitment is absent from places like California Missions, Sutter's Fort and other California Indian sites. Thousands of students still visit these places and they deserve a richer and more authentic representation, and the types of experiences that increased California Indian participation could create.

### Living Museums

Since the 1990s, some museums have begun to shift from a model where they have specific important information that they must convey to visitors to a model where there is more of a dialogue and visitors have the freedom to pick and choose information. The former sees the museum as a "temple" and the latter views the museum as a forum. In the forum, ideas are exchanged and "truths" challenged. In these settings, people explore information and have the freedom to take away meanings based on this exchange. Some museums have gone as far as to allow ethnic groups space and resources to tell their own unmediated stories. In the best of these models, these groups have not been limited in any way in the stories they tell, the language they use, or the sentiments they express. While some museum officials have struggled with the idea of sharing

authority to this degree, others have been richly rewarded not only in terms of visitation and interaction, but in building stronger community relationships and constituencies.

### Employing Native California Indians

As Rika Nelson's article demonstrates (see "California's Tapestry" page 16), employing California Indians presents a number of challenges, all of which can be mitigated over time and by changes of policy and attitude. While some parks may welcome participation by California Indians, they don't always seek it out. And if California Indians do not volunteer, then some parks simply "make do" by ignoring the Indian past and present in their parks, or—at worst—allowing non-Indians to "play" the role of Indians in living history activities and special events. In certain instances, parks become locked in a vicious cycle. Parks employees may want to include representations of California Indian histories associated with their park, but no Native People volunteer. What other choice do they have than to let non-Indians "represent" Indians? In the meantime, Indians see non-Indians in yarn wigs and turkey feathers and want little to do with the park or its employees. Similar predicaments are repeated throughout the state. (see Living History Policy: DOM 0904.6.12)

Living history, whether first- or third-person, is not always the best mode of presentation, but if it is a priority for a park, then it should be done right. And doing it right in the context of interpreting minority histories means getting people to "play themselves" (see Laura Peers, *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions*). To do this, in many cases, we need to realize that volunteerism is not a cultural universal; there are class and racial dimensions related to volunteering one's time, and cultural issues tied to letting a few speak for an entire group. Such issues can be addressed through turning activities, such as living history, from volunteer activities to employment opportunities. And yes, I realize that we have trouble employing our existing staff, but are there no creative ways to initiate such programming? If our relationships with Native California Indian groups were a bit stronger, could we not co-manage programs that employed native youth? Could we not partner with universities to fund grants to employee Native California Indians to present their histories at parks?

# Advice from the Field

## A Conversation with Sarah Fonseca by Ty Smith

For the last six years, **Sarah Fonseca** has been one of the public faces of the **California Indian Heritage Center** project (CIHC). Led by Catherine Taylor, California State Parks staff, including Sarah and California Indian cultural advisors, have worked to move the CIHC from concept to reality. Last year, CIHC officially acquired its first piece of land along the Sacramento River, in West Sacramento. Once built, the CIHC "will honor the diversity and history of California Indian people by preserving cultural and tribal traditions, nurturing contemporary expressions, and facilitating research and education for California, the nation and the world." As this brief conversation with Sarah demonstrates, consultation, while not always easy, is well worth the process, and she offers sound advice for consultation projects big and small.

**You have been doing a lot of work promoting the California Indian Heritage Center; what is your role in this project and how did you become involved in this work?**

My title for this project has been project assistant. It's a catch-all position, where I've assisted the project table in outreach events for the CIHC and maintained the project mailing list. I've communicated with (and coordinated meetings and logistics for) the Indian and Community Advisors (and coordinated) meetings held throughout the General Planning process. (I have) facilitated arrangements for the Task Force members and the

materials for any meetings we've had. I created and helped design the CIHC Newsletter and other outreach materials as well as assisting in the development of the outreach program. I've also assisted in tours given at the CIHC site in West Sacramento.

I became involved with the California Indian Heritage Center back in 2006. My dad, Harry Fonseca, was an Indian Advisor during the Developing Vision process and gave my name to Paulette Hennum. She, at the time, was overseeing various students on the CIHC project, and after speaking with me, she brought me on to do my internship for my final project to graduate from CSUS. From there, I've

continued working on the CIHC, increasing my knowledge and responsibilities as the project moves forward.

**Are there any challenges that you have faced during this process?**

One of my major challenges that the project has brought is the process that a conceptual idea for a State Park must go through in order to become an actual State Park. It is a

lengthy process that the general public and even staff isn't familiar with until you've experienced a project like it. People, including myself, think it's as easy as wanting a park, planning it out and then just getting it built. This couldn't be further from the truth; the process can be frustrating.

**What advice would you give to interpreters wishing to engage in consultation and/or partnerships with Native California Indians?**

My advice to anyone interested in engaging



*Sarah Fonseca describing plans for the future California Indian Heritage*

partnerships with California Indians is to do so. California has such a strong presence of California Indians where their stories can be told throughout the State.

Understand that when getting involved with Native Americans, you need to remember that there are some things you cannot control. There are politics that you may not understand, or underlying circumstances that you may not be privy to. These groups may have internal arguments or may not all agree, and understanding this can help you stay less stressed. This is ok and you just need to be patient.

Many groups have maintained, or are trying to regain, their culture, and we need to recognize that we are coming in as an outsider. They may be wary of you at first and may not always have questions or comments. Many groups will gather the information you have for them and take it back to the tribe. Give them time to talk about it amongst themselves without you or your staff around.

There is a certain way that they may think and believe and to begin this partnership with any Native group, you need to respect their culture and the fact that you are asking for their assistance.

**Could you describe the process of establishing communication with tribal groups? For example, what if an interpreter wanted to consult with Native People on developing an interpretive**

*California Indian Heritage Center brochure*



**program, or creating text for an exhibit that related information from a Native perspective; How would they get started? What steps should they take? And what should they avoid doing?**

If you aren't familiar with anyone from the local tribes, I would first contact the Native American Heritage Commission. They can provide a list of the tribes in the vicinity you are looking for. Keep in mind that some groups on the list may not pertain to your area, while others may not be responsive to your request, or (may be) uncooperative.

Then, contact each tribe and explain what it is you are trying to accomplish. The first person that you should try to get in contact with is the Chairperson of that particular tribe(s). They should be able to assist you or refer you to someone that deals with education or cultural aspects.

Some parks may have several groups that have ties to the area while some may only have one. It's a good practice to try to incorporate all groups, since the boundary lines weren't cut and dry.

As long as you make a fair attempt at reaching out and encouraging the use of the voice from the Native groups, you can walk away with a project or program that you can be proud of. Maintaining relationships with these groups also reinforces future programs and projects, and helps continue collaborations.

If you have people who currently come to the park and help with demonstrations and programs, I would encourage you to bring these folks into the mix and ask for their participation and input. Their help can go in concurrence with the local tribal groups since some may only represent a particular group and (not necessarily) everyone you want to include.

Sarah Fonseca can be reached at:  
[sfonseca@parks.ca.gov](mailto:sfonseca@parks.ca.gov)

Website for California Indian Heritage Center:  
[http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=22628](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=22628)



# California's Tapestry

A Diversity Feature Article

Fall 2012

## *Fitting in with State Parks*

*by Rika C. Nelson  
Manager of Public Programs  
Crocker Art Museum*

On the long drive to Hoopa, California—home of the Hoopa Indian Tribe—to conduct an interview for my master's thesis, my car was circled by a soaring bald eagle. I was struck by its appearance and began to contemplate its spiritual meaning to the individuals of Native American descent whom I had come to know through my research and writing. I researched the bald eagle's many meanings in Native American legend and found a Yokut creation story that seemed poignantly allegorical to my thesis. It begins with eagle and crow, who fly over the waters of a great flood in search of dry land. They find only a tree stump and begin to work together, gathering mud and building dry land themselves. Occasionally, eagle flies away from their tree stump toward the horizon exploring for any signs of new land. One day, eagle returns to find that crow has begun to hoard all of the mud for himself. Feeling betrayed, eagle accuses crow, "Is this your idea of sharing the new world equally?" The story ends with eagle's decision to work in competition with crow and build his land bigger, taller and stronger ("Yokut", 2003). The purpose of my thesis was to re-envision this story as though crow and eagle had worked in concert all along.

My research centered on an in-depth case study on the current professional under-representation of Native Americans in the California State Parks system. The goal of my research was to better understand the causes of this under-representation and to propose recommendations for improving the existing structure.

The interviews I conducted as part of the methodology for my case study were by far the most

impactful part of my thesis and allowed me to connect with this issue in a very personal way. I listened for hours to my interviewees and was moved to tears in several instances as we discussed their stories and experiences; for the sake of privacy I do not identify them by name in this discussion.

In the process of my interviews, I spoke with four California Indians who had worked for CA State

***"...she was approached by an elder who told her that she needed to think of her community first and to be wary of giving information to State Parks. She said this and other experiences caused her to feel conflicted over her obligation to her job at State Parks versus her obligations to her community."***

Parks. All four interviewees had been hired to work with the Task Force for the California Indian Heritage Center (CIHC). I found that interviewees expressed initial enthusiasm about their positions; Interviewee D stated, "I was honored to be part of the State Parks system ... because of the direction they were going ... I was a trailblazer to educate California Indians across the state because State Parks was making an effort. I was proud of that."

Despite initial enthusiasm, interviewees referenced the ways in which their being hired at State Parks impacted their cultural identities and their interactions with their respective communities. Interviewee A told of an experience she had in her community in which she was approached by an elder who told her that she needed to think of her community first and to be wary of giving information to State Parks. She said this and other experiences caused her to feel conflicted over her obligation to her job at State Parks versus her obligations to her community.



State Parks' reputation among California Indians was a common topic of discussion during my interviews. Interviewee B described this relationship, stating, "People were very leery of the project, based on past experiences with State Parks." Some described their positions as being part of an effort to rectify this issue by representing and including California Natives in the State Parks' workforce.

Another commonality among California Indian interviewee responses was that none had been hired through the state's official hiring process. These "unofficial appointments" were in many ways a double-edged sword. (The appointments) fostered a lack of legitimacy for these employees, but without them it would have been impossible to offer paid positions. When asked if the unofficial status at State Parks negatively affected his experiences, Interviewee B said, "Maybe we weren't good enough to be State Parks employees, or maybe what we said carried less weight." In addition to this lack of perceived legitimacy, many interviewees commented on the lack of coaching or mentoring offered to them on ways to navigate the State's hiring system and to secure permanent positions. Interviewee A observed, "I never understood how to become a full-time employee, no one even told me about the testing." Other respondents reported that they were encouraged to take the tests but with mixed results. Interviewee C reported that she was encouraged but refused to test on philosophical grounds, stating, "I'm very familiar with Indian Culture, why should I have to take a test to prove it?"

My second group of interviewees consisted of current State Parks employees, many of whom had direct interaction with the California Indian interviewees quoted above. These interviews exhibited several commonalities, the first being the acknowledgement that the State's hiring system is imperfect.

Interviewee H stated, "It's unbelievable how complicated a simple thing like hiring can be." When asked why he thought State Parks has been unable to hire and retain more Native Americans, Interviewee E replied, "We're victims of the system, I don't know if there's any guilt to be passed around."

Another commonality was the recognition that change in the hiring system could result in more successful inclusion of California Natives in the State Parks workforce. The interviewees cited many factors as

barriers for change. Interviewee F summarized her opinions on barriers to change asserting, "I suppose the policy is already in place and if the policies are in place the people who are performing all of the hiring functions have to adhere to that policy, that's the way it is. I think the possibility of change occurs when one person or a group of people decides that the status quo isn't working and try to effect change through unofficial channels."

One interviewee cited a resistant

organizational culture as a potential inhibitor for change. He observed, "State Parks is basically run by rangers without a cultural background." Two interviewees informed me of a past incident between State Parks and two Native American rangers who were asked to cut off their traditional braids in order to comply with the uniform standards. I gathered that



*State Parks employees and volunteers staff an interpretive booth at a special event at the California State Capitol.*

***Continued on Next Page...***

## California's Tapestry Continued...

these incidences are rare; however, they were remembered by most of the interviewees I spoke with.

Lastly, several of the individuals with whom I spoke admitted that Native American applicants are at a disadvantage when applying for State Parks jobs. Interviewee F elaborated on this issue stating, "I would say that there is some disadvantage, I don't think that it's just a perception. People who are of traditional cultures, brought up in a traditional Environment, might not be perceived as a good fit."

The interviews I conducted also elicited positive reflections on State Parks and its accomplishments in terms on the inclusion of California Indians in State Parks' workforce.

Interviewee E had this to say about State Parks' accomplishments in its relationships with California Indians: "With all its fits and starts, State Parks has tried to improve the way in which it depicts California Indian history and culture since at least the mid-1970s. It still has a long way to go...When the CI HC comes on line, if done correctly, there will be still more improvement."

The positive responses from State Parks employees were characterized by a sense of organizational pride. The majority of these descriptions involved what Interviewee I described as, "being personality-driven." Interviewee J described a recent candidate search for a Curator One position; she (told of) her use of extra recruitment efforts in Native Communities and other minority communication channels to attract "the best and most diverse hiring pool possible." She iterated that this recruitment effort was not officially required of her department but that it was important to her and her staff to make these extra efforts, saying, "We do what we can."

Unlike the Yokut creation story cited above, this tale has no clear moral. My case study of CA State Parks uncovered two groups of people working toward the same goals, but in a system that did not foster an environment of equality within diversity. The complete findings and recommendations of my research are too lengthy to list here, but suffice it to say, based on the responses of my interview subjects, change is imperative to creating a 'California State Parks system that reflects the multicultural resources which they preserve and share.

Photo courtesy of Rika Nelson



**Rika Nelson** is the Coordinator of Volunteer and Internship Programs for the Crocker Art Museum. She hails from Southern Oregon where she was an active participant in her High School's Rotary Interact Club, as well as a winner of the Rotary Youth Leadership Award and a RYLA Camp attendee. She received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Washington with a double major in History and American Indian Studies and went on to receive both a Master of Arts degree in Museum Administration and a Master of Business Administration degree from John F. Kennedy University. She has been working with volunteers in Sacramento museums for the past four years and enjoys working with those who so generously donate their time to Sacramento's growing artistic and cultural landscape.

## The Privilege of Partnership by Connie McGough State Indian Museum

Much has been said about the fact that we at California State Parks, as caretakers of some of the most impressive Native American cultural materials in existence, find ourselves de facto educators of Native history and culture. This sets the stage for interpretive programming that requires genuine



partnering with California's Native people, and the privilege of this partnership entails responsibility and a unique set of challenges.

Developing programming to meet the needs of a State Parks site in a Native American environment requires cultural sensitivity on many levels. The fact is that we are a government agency, and Native peoples and government have a long history of strife and mutual mistrust. Collaboration takes a true understanding of this concept and a strong desire to assuage prior missteps and actions. This translates



*Docent Mike Maulhardt teaches an eager young visitor how to make a clapstick, a traditional Native musical instrument used throughout California.*

into building relationships one day at a time, one person at a time.

One way to assist this process is to avoid use of the word "artifact" in favor of "cultural item." In terms of Native culture, "artifact" is an outdated descriptor. It stems from the "old" days of curios (as in curio cabinets) and infers oddity and/or a bygone era. Note that the word "museum" can also be abrasive—it conjures up days of yore and promotes thinking of Indian people in past tense terms. My experience with Indian people has taught me one very important thing: not only are they still here, but it is their wish that we deliver that message in all of our programming. By incorporating contemporary Native topics we also

provide our visitors the opportunity to gain a multi-faceted understanding of California's indigenous people, and to inspire pathways to further learning.

By utilizing these concepts, a well-rounded series of apposite cultural programs are the foundation for interpretation at the State Indian Museum. A "new and improved" docent training program, formalized into written curriculum for sustainability, effectively trains volunteers to understand, appreciate, and interpret Native history and culture. An Outreach Education Program has been developed to include formal training, Native-made traditional cultural items, marketing materials, and educational literature.

We celebrate California Native Elders in an annual event each June, and in November the museum will host its first-ever celebration of Native American Month. Indian basket weaving demonstrations, book signings with such notable Native authors as Billy Mills, and traditional skills workshops are planned; the program will be rounded out with a two-day Indian Arts & Crafts Holiday Fair. Our success with these and other interpretive programs is a direct result of cultural association and the sensitivity we

have learned and employed.



*Connie McGough poses proudly with class members from Sacramento State University who she mentored to prepare for work with Native communities.*

The privilege afforded in partnering with California Indian people involves a unique set of challenges. Experience has shown that it is also uniquely

rewarding—but only if we make every effort to ensure that we

honor the "partner" in partnership by being open to, and including, Native California voice and experience in our projects.

Connie McGough can be reached at:  
[cmcgough@parks.ca.gov](mailto:cmcgough@parks.ca.gov)

---

# The Catalyst

## Fall 2012, Partnerships with Native California Indians

# Contents

	cover
From the Guest Editor	page 3
Resources for Interpreters	pages 4-5
Clarifying Tribal Consultation	pages 5-6
The IPIT Report—Interpreting to Diverse Audiences	pages 6-7
Thoughts on Consultation	page 8
Dear Master Interpreter	page 9
Getting it Right in the Redwoods	page 10
By the Numbers	page 11
Building Partnerships with Native California Indians	pages 12-13
Advice from the Field	Pages 14-15
California's Tapestry—Fitting in with State Parks	pages 16-18
The Privilege of Partnership	page 18-19



Interpretation and Education Division  
PO Box 942896  
Sacramento CA 94296-0001